

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 /104 W
-----032753 021526Z /50

R 021400Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6430
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ABIDJAN 11703

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, XY, IV, AO
SUBJECT: IVORIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ON CEAO DEFENSE
PACT AND OTHER ISSUES

REF: A. ABIDJAN 11388 (NOTAL) B. ABIDJAN 10382 (NOTAL)

1. FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED ME TO COME BY YESTERDAY
(NOVEMBER 30) AND IN COURSE OF A RAMBLING CONVERSATION
REFERRED TO SEVERAL SUBJECTS OF CURRENT INTEREST,
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INCLUDING IVORIAN VIEWS ON THE CEAO DEFENSE PACT,
ANGOLA, DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HORN, AND THE MIDDLE EAST.

2. AKE, WHO HAD ATTENDED THE FIRST MEETING OF THE
WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (CEAO) NON-AGGRESSION
AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE PACT IN OUAGADOUGOU NOVEMBER 7-15,
SAID THAT THE IVORIAN GOVERNMENT WAS GENERALLY SATISFIED

WITH THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING. IT WAS OBVIOUSLY GOING TO TAKE TIME TO CREATE A DEFENSE STRUCTURE WHICH SATISFIED THE DIFFERING NEEDS AND POLICIES OF THE STATES CONCERNED. THE OUAGADOUGOU MEETING HAD PRINCIPALLY CONCERNED ITSELF WITH ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS, ALTHOUGH THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE PACT HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AS WELL. THE PACT, AS IT NOW STOOD, WAS ESSENTIALLY A PACT OF NON-AGGRESSION. THE MUTUAL ASSISTANCE FEATURES HAD YET TO BE DEFINED. THERE WOULD BE A SECRETARIAT, (PRESUMABLY BASED IN ABIDJAN), AND PROVISION FOR CONSULTATIONS TO BE HELD AMONG THE HEADS OF THE MEMBER STATES IN THE EVENT THAT ANY ONE OF THEM WAS ATTACHED BY AN OUTSIDE POWER. I ASKED AKE WHETHER ANY AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED ON A COMMON CEAO DEFENSE FORCE AND WHETHER THE IVORIAN GOVERNMENT'S RECENT DECISION TO PURCHASE SIX ALPHA JET AIRCRAFT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS A STEP IN THIS DIRECTION. AKE REPLIED THAT IT IS MUCH TOO EARLY TO TALK ABOUT A COMMON DEFENSE FORCE. NO DECISION TO CREATE SUCH A FORCE HAD BEEN REACHED IN OUAGADOUGOU. SUCH QUESTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE CHIEFS OF STATE OF THE MEMBER COUNTRIES AT THEIR NEXT MEETING WHICH, IN THE NORMAL COURSE OF EVENTS, WOULD OCCUR SOMETIME IN 1978.

3. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION ABOUT THE STATUS OF HOUPHOUET'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SOMALI-KENYAN RELATIONS (REFTEL B), AKE SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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EMISSARY HAD COMPLETED HIS MISSION TO MOGADISCIO AND HAD BEEN "WELL RECEIVED" BY SIAD BARRE, BUT AKE WAS UNINFORMED ABOUT THE DETAILS OF THEIR MEETING. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD ASK HOUPHOUET WHETHER ANYTHING OF SIGNIFICANCE HAD OCCURRED WHICH COULD BE PASSED ALONG TO US AND THE BRITISH.

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ABIDJAN 11703

4. ON ANGOLA, AKE WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR BRINGING ABOUT A CEASEFIRE AND DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN LUANDA AND UNITA. THERE HAD BEEN NO NEW INITIATIVES BY HOUPHOUET, ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT WAS MAINTAINING HIS CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION WITH BOTH SIDES. AKE BELIEVED THAT ALTHOUGH AUGUSTINO NETO MIGHT PERSONALLY BE DISPOSED TO SEEK A COMPROMISE WITH SAVIMBI, THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS WOULD PREVENT HIM FROM DOING SO AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

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5. ON THE MIDDLE EAST, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT IT WAS VITAL TO PREVENT THE ISOLATION OF SADAT WITHIN THE ARAB WORLD. THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT BADLY NEEDED SUPPORT AND THIS WAS WHY HOUPHOUET HAD BEEN PROMPT IN SENDING SADAT A TELEGRAM OF SUPPORT. AKE HIMSELF HAD BEEN URGING THE ARAB AMBASSADORS TO ABIDJAN TO AVOID PUBLIC CRITICISM OF SADAT, EVEN IF THEIR GOVERNMENTS WERE UNWILLING TO SUPPORT HIM. THE ALGERIAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES HAD TOLD AKE THAT SADAT WAS "CREATING DISSENSION IN THE ARAB WORLD." AKE SAID THAT HE HAD REPLIED THAT DISSENSION HAD EXISTED IN THE ARAB WORLD LONG BEFORE SADAT'S TRIP TO JERUSALEM. THE ALGERIANS SHOULD REALIZE THAT SADAT'S COURAGEOUS INITIATIVE HAD GAINED IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGES FOR ALL THE

ARABS, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIANS, WITHOUT PREJUDICING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SPECIFIC ARAB OBJECTIVES. IF COUNTRIES LIKE ALGERIA REALLY FEARED THAT SADAT WOULD SEEK A SEPARATE PEACE, THEY SHOULD CLOSE RANKS WITH THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT, NOT ATTACK HIM IN PUBLIC. AKE ADDED THAT, LEAVING ASIDE THE ATTITUDE OF THE OTHER ARAB STATES, THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF SADAT'S INITIATIVE -- INDEED SADAT'S SURVIVAL AS A POLITICAL LEADER -- OBVIOUSLY DEPENDED ON THE WILLINGNESS OF THE ISRAELIS TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS. ONLY THE UNITED STATES COULD CONVINCE THE ISRAELIS TO BE FLEXIBLE, AND AKE HOPED WE WERE PREPARED TO MAKE THE NECESSARY EFFORT IN TEL AVIV. I TOLD AKE THAT WE APPRECIATED HOUPHOUET'S GESTURE OF SUPPORT FOR SADAT AND THAT WE WERE AWARE OF THE RISKS SADAT WAS RUNNING. I WAS CONFIDENT THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO DO OUR UTMOST TO PERSUADE THE ISRAELIS TO MEET HIM HALFWAY.

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6. COMMENT: AKE'S COMMENTS ON OUAGADOUGOU MEETING TALLY WITH OTHER INFORMATION WE HAVE BEEN RECEIVING. IT DOES SEEM CLEAR FROM HOUPHOUET'S REMARKS TO CODEL PRICE (REFTEL A) ABOUT THE CREATION OF A "MODEST AIR ARM" BASED IN THE IVORY COAST TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL DEFENSE CAPABILITIES, THAT HOUPHOUET HIMSELF LIKE SENGHOR, ENTERTAINS FAIRLY AMBITIOUS EXPECTATIONS FOR THE PACT. AKE'S CAUTIOUS APPRAISAL OF THE RESULTS OF THE OUAGADOUGOU MEETING SUGGEST THAT IVORY COAST AND SENEGAL ARE STILL A LONG WAY FROM RECONCILING THEIR OWN VIEWS OF THE PACT WITH THAT OF THEIR MORE CAUTIOUS AND EXPOSED NEIGHBORS.

7. ON THE HORN IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT HOUPHOUET'S EFFORTS IN MOGADISCIO HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY PRODUCTIVE. THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR EXPECTS TO SEE HOUPHOUET IN THE NEXT WEEK OR TEN DAYS AND MAY BE ABLE TO OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION THAN AKE EVIDENTLY POSSESSED FOR WAS WILLING TO REVEAL.
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